

<b>Responsible Department:</b>	Office of the CEO
<b>Responsible Business Unit:</b>	Governance
<b>Date of Review:</b>	18 March 2026
<b>Council Resolution:</b>	210326

#### 1. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this Policy is to develop a structured and systematic approach to dealing with complaints received by the Shire of Chittering (the Shire) from external persons. Additionally to assure the community that complaints may be made without fear of recrimination and that all complaints will be promptly deal with and a (written if required) response will be given setting out the answer to the complaint providing reasons, where appropriate.

#### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Shire Staff.

This policy does not apply to Elected Members and/or staff in regards to minor and/or serious breaches. Complaints regarding Elected Members are covered by “Code of Conduct – Council Members” Policy.

#### 3. DEFINITIONS

**Complainant** means a person or entity who lodges a complaint with the Shire.

**Service Level Complaint** means a complaint relating to the standard, timeliness, quality or delivery of a Shire service, customer service interaction or operational activity.

**External Review** means a review of a complaint by an independent body external to the Shire.

#### 4. POLICY STATEMENT

The Shire is committed to operating in a transparent manner and responding to dissatisfaction from customers relating to the services provided, customer service received and general operation of the Shire.

In the event that a complaint or report of dissatisfaction is received, the shire will endeavour to provide a response within a reasonable timeframe.

If a complaint is received, and it will potentially be brought to the attention of the Council, by an outside party, officers will endeavour to make Councillors aware of the issue as soon as practicable.

The Council recognises that good complaints handling is an integral part of customer service and provides an effective way of reviewing performance and monitoring standards.

## SHIRE POLICY 1.3

### Service Level Complaints Handling

#### 4.1. Guidelines

A complaint, by definition, is an 'expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation, related to its services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required'.

Every attempt should be made to immediately resolve complaints presented at the counter or by telephone by the attending officer or referred to the appropriate officer.

Council staff will advise the customer of their rights and obligations and the correct method for their type of complaint.

If a formal complaint is lodged, the Shire will determine complaints as quickly as possible and will keep the complainant (and if applicable, the person who is the subject of the complaint) advised of the progress, details of the resolution and reasons.

At a minimum, the following information is to be supplied – preferably on the appropriate form – in order to effectively process the complaint: -

- Name and address.
- Contact details.
- Complaint details.
- Date/s of occurrence of complaint.

The relevant officers will investigate and may determine to take the following courses of action: -

- Take no further action and give the complainant reason/s;
- Resolve the complaint by use of other appropriate strategies such as, but not limited to, mediation, informal discussion or negotiation;
- Discontinue the assessment in circumstances where it becomes evident that the matter would be referred to another body or person and advise the complainant accordingly.

Should the complainant not be satisfied with the result, written application to Council is required within 30 days.

External review options are available, the CEO will advise Complainants of the available options.

Customer correspondence, telephone conversations or interviews which proceed in an inflammatory manner will not be acted on. Where this occurs, the Shire has the right to terminate conversations or interviews after warning the customer of that intention.

The written complaint is to be recorded in the Shire's Electronic Record System (eg. Synergy).

The written complaint is also to be registered in the Complaint Register.

### 4.2. Anonymous Complaints

An anonymous customer complaint will only be investigated where reasonable and sufficient information is provided and which, in the opinion of a Shire employee, constitutes:

- a) A breach of statutory provisions;
- b) A breach of an approval, licence or permit;
- c) A matter for which the Shire is obligated to act, prescribed in the *Local Government Act 1995*, *Corruption Crime & Misconduct Act 2003* or under any other written law (i.e. the Public Interest Disclosure (PID) legislation);
- d) A matter which is not attended to could reasonably constitute a risk to the public health and safety of persons, animals or the environment; and
- e) A submission relating to the exercise of a regulatory function; and
- f) A petition.

## 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring the implementation of this Policy and that appropriate complaint management systems are in place.

Governance is responsible for maintaining the Complaint Register and monitoring compliance with this Policy.

All staff are responsible for managing complaints professionally, seeking early resolution where appropriate, and ensuring complaints are properly recorded and escalated as required.

## 6. COMPLIANCE

<b>Legislation</b>	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i> <i>Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996</i> <i>Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003</i> <i>Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003</i> <i>State Records Act 2000</i> <i>Freedom of Information Act 1992</i>
<b>Industry</b>	Ombudsman Western Australia – Guidelines for Complaint Handling Australian Standard – AS10002:2022 – Guidelines for complaint management in organisations
<b>Organisational Documents</b>	Policy 1.5 – Record Keeping Code of Conduct - Elected Members, Committee Members and Candidates Code of Conduct – Employees Delegated Authority Register External Complaint Form Shire of Chittering Customer Service Charter
<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	Communities Connected

# SHIRE POLICY 1.3

## Service Level Complaints Handling

### 7. ADMINISTRATION

<b>Review Cycle</b>	Every 3 years	<b>Next Review Due</b>	March 2027
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Chief Executive Officer		
<b>Version</b>	<b>Decision Ref</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Change</b>
1.0	Unknown	15/04/2009	Initial adoption
2.0	160620	17/06/2020	Amendment
3.0	130722	20/07/2022	Amendment
4.0	151022	19/10/2022	Amendment
5.0	210326	18/03/2026	Review